



COLUMBIA POLICE DEPARTMENT INTERNAL AFFAIRS UNIT

TO: CHIEF OF POLICE GEOFF JONES

FROM: SGT. SCOTT ALPERS, INTERNAL AFFAIRS

REF: ANNUAL ANALYSIS OF MOTOR VEHICLE PURSUITS 2019

DATE: June 30, 2020

The following report was completed for compliance with the CALEA standards regarding Pursuits of Motor Vehicles (41.2.2). The CALEA standard is as follows:

A written directive governs pursuit of motor vehicles, to include:

- (Subsections A through K are addressed by Columbia Police Department Policy 314, Vehicle Pursuits.)
- Subsection L - conducting a documented annual analysis of pursuit reports, to include a review of policy and reporting procedures, approved by the agency CEO.

This report will include a review of the Columbia Police Department's vehicle pursuit reporting procedures as well as the 64 vehicle pursuits that occurred in 2019.

Reporting:

Columbia Police Department Policy 314.9, Vehicle Pursuits, outlines the reporting requirements for members of the department after engaging in a vehicle pursuit. Vehicle pursuits are documented via Blue Team software. After documentation is entered, vehicle pursuits undergo a three-level review. The department member's first-line supervisor, a Watch Commander, and a Bureau Commander will conduct a preliminary review of the pursuit and determine if the pursuit was "proper" or "improper" under policy. The Bureau Commander will determine if the facts surrounding the incident warrant further investigation. If the Bureau Commander requests an investigation, the incident is forwarded to the Internal Affairs Unit. If other violations of policy outside of 314 are discovered, they are included in the investigation.

If a pursuit is deemed proper in the preliminary review, no further action is taken on the incident. Generally, vehicle pursuits are reviewed independently of other aspects of an event such as use of force or citizen complaints. There is no reporting mechanism in place for involvement in the pursuits of other jurisdictions.

Due to this department's CALEA self-assessment process, Policy 314 was reviewed and revised to include the following CALEA standards requirements:

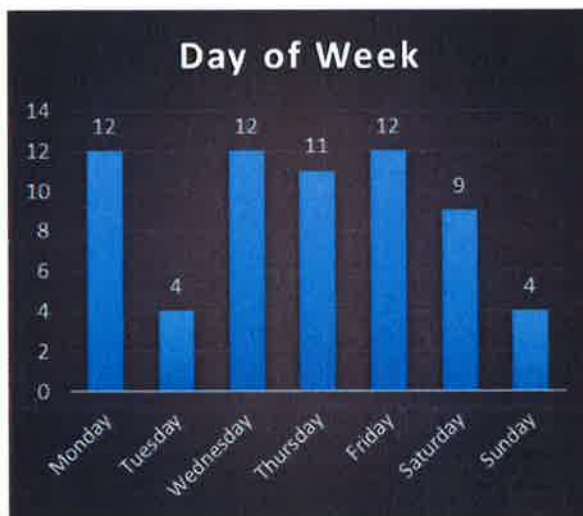
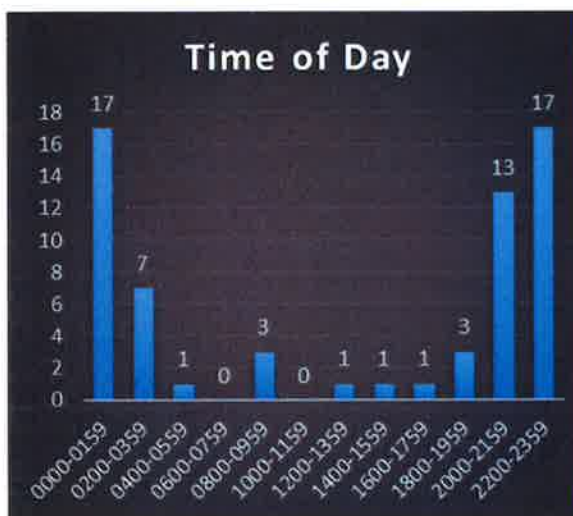
- A documented annual analysis of pursuit reports, to include a review of the pursuit policy and reporting procedures;
- Documented initial training in vehicle pursuits for all new hires; and
- A documented annual review of pursuit policy by all sworn personnel.

Because vehicle pursuits are inherently dangerous to all involved as well as the public, our pursuit policy exceeds these requirements and calls for biannual training which includes a review of the pursuit policy and a test to demonstrate the transfer of knowledge.

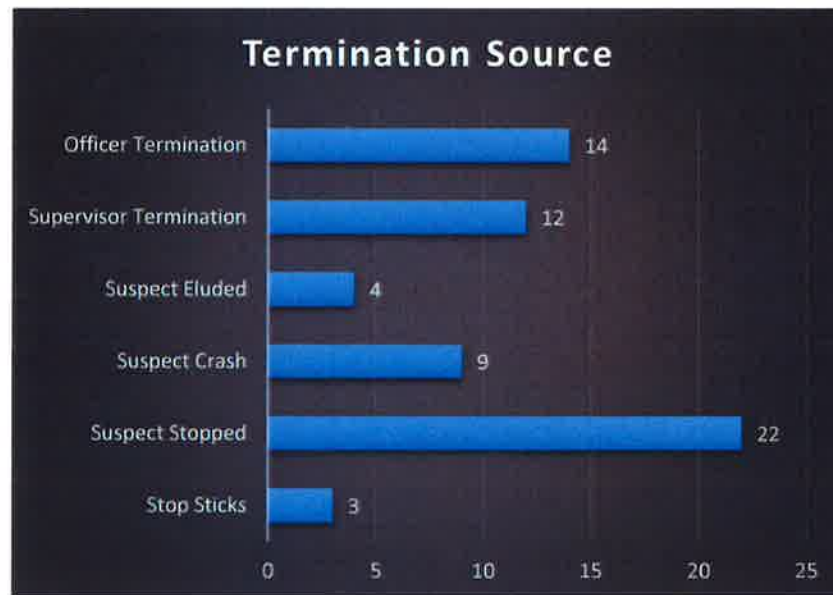
Quarterly training on policy 314 is scheduled for 2020 which exceeds those minimum requirements outlined in the policy.

Analysis:

In 2019, Officers of the Columbia Police Department engaged in 64 motor vehicle pursuits. The vast majority of the pursuits occurred during the evening and early morning hours. 55 of the pursuits occurred between 8pm-6am. The shortest duration pursuit was 1 minute and the longest was 28 minutes. The average pursuit lasted approximately 5 minutes.



Of the 64 pursuits, fourteen (14) were terminated by the pursuing officer, twelve (12) were terminated by a supervisor, twenty-two (22) concluded with the suspect stopping, four (4) concluded with the suspect eluding police, three (3) concluded by an officer using "Stop Sticks" and nine (9) resulted in the suspect vehicle crashing. Pursuits were initiated for both felonies, misdemeanors and ordinance violations. A total of forty (40) pursuits ended with arrests, two (2) with no arrests, one (1) with no arrest, but driver identified and twenty one (21) with no arrest and no known driver.



Sixty two (62) pursuits were initiated within the Columbia city limits and Two (2) pursuits were started outside the Columbia city limits. Nine (9) pursuits concluded outside of the Columbia city limits. Three (3) pursuits resulted in property damage to uninvolved vehicles, suspect vehicles, and/or other property. Two (2) pursuits resulted in the injuries to an occupant(s) of a suspect vehicle. One (1) person suffered fatal injuries during a vehicle pursuit. No officers reported injuries as a result of the vehicle pursuits.

Forty Eight (48) of the pursuits were found to be "proper" and fourteen (14) were found to be "improper." At the time of this report, two (2) pursuits were being reviewed or being investigated as an internal investigation.

In analyzing the "improper" pursuits, the majority were terminated at the intervention and direction of a supervisor following the policy in place at the time. A short analysis of the "improper" pursuits follows:

<u>Tracking Number</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Reason Improper</u>	<u>Result</u>
VP2019-0015	05/25/2019	Initiating a pursuit	Performance log, Training
VP2019-0023	07/21/2019	Continuing pursuit after termination at high speed	Performance Log, Coaching

VP2019-0025	07/18/2019	Terminating pursuit, Safe operation of vehicle	Remedial Training, Verbal Warning
VP2019-0028	07/30/2019	Safe operation of vehicle	Counseling
VP2019-0033	08/22/2019	Safe operation of vehicle	Counseling
VP2019-0036	09/07/2019	Continuation of pursuit	Policy review
VP2019-0041	10/10/2019	Terminating Pursuit, Safe operation of vehicle	Verbal Warning
VP2019-0042	10/17/2019	Terminating Pursuit	Verbal Warning
VP2019-0044	10/19/2019	Initiating a pursuit, Safe operation of vehicle	Suspension
VP2019-0045	10/25/2019	Initiating a pursuit, Pursuit intervention, Safe operation of vehicle	Suspension, Remedial Training
VP2019-0056	12/01/2019	Safe operation of vehicle	Performance Log, Coaching
VP2019-0059	12/10/2019	Terminating pursuit, Safe operation of vehicle	Suspension
VP2019-0062	12/19/2019	Safe operation of vehicle	Coaching
VP2019-0063	12/23/2019	Safe operation of vehicle	Performance Log

Conclusion:

On March 20, 2019, the Columbia Police Department motor vehicle pursuit policy (Policy 314) was revised. Lieutenant Lance Bolinger provided training to sworn members of the police department prior to the policy implementation. The training included a PowerPoint presentation, policy review and discussion. The policy revision gave officers "Conditional Authorization" to initiate a motor vehicle pursuit. However, officers had to make a decision if the immediate apprehension of the suspect outweighed the risks associated to a vehicle pursuit.

Motor vehicle pursuits by Columbia Police Department Officers in 2019 increased 300% from the previous year. The significant increase in pursuits could be attributed to many factors. However, it appears as though the change in the motor vehicle pursuit policy has led to the increase.

The revised Columbia Police Department policy did not forbid officers to pursue subjects for misdemeanor or infractions. However, the policy stated that "Infractions, misdemeanors and property crimes do not warrant the same level of risk as might be taken to apprehend violent felons." Forty (40) or 63% of the motor vehicle pursuits were initiated for a misdemeanor or infraction.

Motor vehicle pursuits are inherently dangerous. The risks of a vehicle pursuit can lead to unintended consequences for the general public, officers and occupants of vehicles involved in pursuits. In 2019, two

pursuits resulted in the injury of those pursued and one pursuit concluded with the death of the pursued suspect. This equates to 5% of motor vehicle pursuits concluding with an injury or death.

The highest number of terminations came from suspects themselves at 22 times, or 34% of the total number of pursuits. Officers terminated their pursuits 14 times, or 22% of the total number of pursuits. Supervisors terminated pursuits 12 times, or 19% of the total number of pursuits. Suspects crashed their vehicle during 9 pursuits, or 14% of the total number of pursuits. The suspect eluded capture 4 times, or 6% of the total number of pursuits. Officers were able to successfully terminate a pursuit by using stop sticks 3 times, or 5% of the total number of pursuits.